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UNFPA management response
to
Report of the Ethics Office 2024 (DP/FPA/2025/7)

UNFPA – Reports of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS Ethics Offices

Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS

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- 1) UNFPA management acknowledges with appreciation the work of the UNFPA Ethics Office, and for its continuous support to assist the Executive Director in cultivating and nurturing a culture of ethics, integrity and accountability, thereby enhancing the trust in and the credibility of UNFPA, both internally and externally. The work of the Ethics Office is integral to the tone at the top set by the Executive Director when it comes to the organization's zero tolerance policy against any form of wrongdoing.
- 2) Management commends the Ethics Office in the accomplishment of its mandated activities for 2024 and for its work to promote integrity, accountability, fairness and safety for all UNFPA personnel.
- 3) Management acknowledges that, notwithstanding the leadership transition in 2024, where the previous Ethics Advisor completed her mandate in July and the current advisor began in August, the Ethics Office has remained strategically focused on enhancing mandate delivery, improving processes and capacity, strengthening the ethical framework, and renewing communications and outreach. Management commends efforts to build on past achievements and continue to strengthen the UNFPA ethics framework and facilitate a sustainable speak-up culture.
- 4) Management commends the Ethics Office for responding to 776 service requests from across the organization regarding ethical issues in 2024, and for responding to 644 requests for advice and guidance; and for achieving a 100 per cent completion rate in the financial disclosure programme. Management appreciates the Ethics Office's ongoing engagement with other offices when relevant, including those comprising the Integrity Group (the Office of Audit and Investigation Services (OAIS), the Ombudsman, and the Division for Human Resources, the Legal Unit and the Coordinator, Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment). In particular, management appreciates the Ethics Office's work in ensuring that ethics is integrated in learning across different organizational levels in order to promote ethical leadership at UNFPA.
- 5) Further, management recognizes and appreciates the work of the Ethics Office, which included providing guidance and advice to staff, personnel and management; the administration of the financial disclosure programme; Ethics standards development, training and education, and for undertaking the preliminary review of requests for protection from retaliation.
- 6) Management notes the Ethics Office received 20 queries, resulting in 12 formal requests for protection from retaliation, which is a substantial increase from the 4 requests in 2023. This increase is an indication of a stronger speak-up culture at UNFPA, reflecting ongoing efforts to raise awareness and improve access to the Ethics Office through outreach and training. Management highlights that two matters were referred for investigation, with protective measures implemented by the administration. One investigation concluded with a finding of retaliation and Management implemented remedial measures, and one investigation is currently underway. Nine matters were closed due to a no prima facie determination, and one request was withdrawn. Management values the Ethics Office's contributions to addressing workplace abuse and retaliation and will continue to support its efforts to raise awareness, expand reach, and encourage service utilization.
- 7) In regard to the Ethics Office's role in managing the financial disclosure programme, management acknowledges that the financial disclosure programme is an important tool for UNFPA to help identify, resolve and mitigate conflict of interest risks arising from staff members' personal financial assets, liabilities, investments and outside activities. Overall, 946 staff members (or 26.5 per cent of the total staff population of 3,571) were required to file financial disclosures. 100 per cent of the 946 staff required to file complied and all submission were reviewed by the Ethics Office. Management is pleased to recognize that all of the 4 actual or perceived conflicts of interest were resolved and notes the stressed importance of the accuracy, completeness, and timeliness of all staff disclosures and welcomes further guidance from the Ethics Office to ensure that staff members understand requirements. Management will continue to work with the Ethics Office to raise awareness and promote compliance with this programme as designated in the UNFPA Policy on Financial Disclosure and Declaration of Interest.
- 8) Management notes with appreciation the renewed efforts to conduct in-person visits and workshops with UNFPA personnel to directly interact with the Ethics Office to promote trust-building and to conduct workshops, moderate group discussions and hold one-to-one conversations with management and personnel.

9) Further, management recognizes the work of the Ethics Office for the stable compliance with mandatory online training at 72 percent; specifically recognizing the cooperation of the Ethics Office with the UNFPA Learning team to update the mandatory course in order to offer the training to personnel in additional languages, and in line with recommendation 3 DP/FPA/2025/76 in the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) report on the ethics function in the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2021/5).

10) Management encourages the sustained focus on awareness raising and outreach activities and appreciates the Ethics Office efforts to maintain high-quality content, impactful communication strategy with a consistent voice and refreshed brand identity. Management acknowledges the impact of these communication and outreach efforts to promote ethical awareness and provide accessible guidance to all personnel in the global UNFPA workforce.

13) Management takes note that for this reporting period, the Ethics Office is not submitting any specific management recommendations. Management further positively notes and acknowledges the Ethics Office regularly engages in an ongoing dialogue with management to make recommendations to strengthen the organizational culture of integrity and compliance at UNFPA. Management commends the Ethics Office on its commitment to safeguard the reputation of UNFPA as a trusted and respected institution.

14) Management's commitment to cultivating and nurturing a culture of ethics, integrity and accountability at UNFPA is proven by the decision to maintain the originally planned 2025 budget allocation, despite the challenging funding environment

15) As in previous years, UNFPA compliments the Ethics Office on continuing to strengthen the services that it provides under its mandated areas of work and will continue to provide strong support to its work. Management looks forward to a continuing fruitful collaboration to foster a culture of ethics and integrity in UNFPA.
